

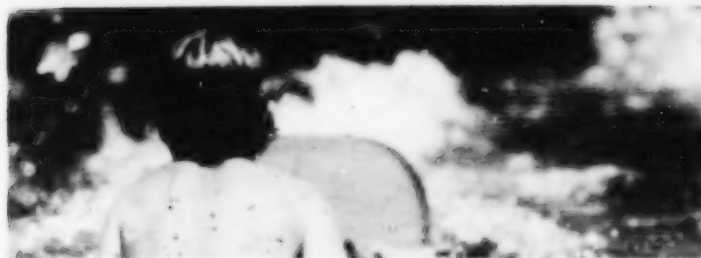
Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy

Working Together for a Safer, Healthier Ontario



Ontario

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Health Promotion is a champion of healthy public policy in Ontario. We are committed to working closely with our partners in government and across sectors to develop and influence policies, programs and practices that enable individuals and communities to live healthy, active and safe lives.

Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy has been informed by a dialogue with government ministries and agencies, public health professionals, and leading injury prevention experts from the following organizations:

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences
- Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation
- Ontario Public Health Association
- Safe Communities Canada
- Safe Kids Canada
- SMARTRISK
- St. Michael's Hospital
- Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
- ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada
- Toronto Public Health
- University of Toronto
- York University

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER, HEALTHIER ONTARIO

The Ministry of Health Promotion is a leader and champion of health promotion and the prevention of chronic diseases and injuries for all Ontarians.

We are committed to developing and implementing policies and programs that will enable individuals, families and communities to improve their health and reduce their risk of injury. Our complementary priorities – Smoke-Free Ontario, Healthy Eating and Active Living, *ACTIVE2010: Ontario's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy*, Injury Prevention, and Mental Health Promotion – form a comprehensive approach to health promotion and chronic disease prevention. Our partners in public health, and national and community organizations provide frontline leadership for the planning, delivery and integration of these key initiatives.

Reports from leaders in the field of injury prevention have highlighted compelling facts about the rates of preventable injuries in Ontario, and recommended that governments take a leadership role in developing a comprehensive injury prevention strategy to coordinate and integrate efforts and activities across the province.

For example, the 2002 Chief Medical Officer of Health's report, *Injury: Predictable and Preventable* and reports from SMARTRISK, a leading national injury prevention organization,

have highlighted the significant personal, social and economic burden of injury to the residents of Ontario and our provincial health system. They have also recommended the need for a cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral approach to this important public health issue.

Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy is the provincial government's response to this call to action and represents our first steps to strengthen everyday efforts across sectors that are helping make Ontario a safer place.

LEARNING FROM ONTARIO'S LEADERS IN INJURY PREVENTION

Ontario has a strong foundation of community engagement and mobilization efforts to build upon, with public health units and many organizations working every day to make the province a safer place. For example:

- Ministries and agencies across the Government of Ontario are supporting healthy, active and safe living initiatives, including efforts to educate kids about personal safety and the prevention of injuries; making workplaces healthy and safe; raising parent and caregiver awareness about child safety; and raising awareness and coordinating efforts to address elder abuse.
- Ontario's 36 public health units are working with partners across sectors to deliver mandated injury prevention programs and services that address local community needs.
- National, provincial, and community organizations are bringing people together to increase awareness about known risks for injury and helping to shape communities into safer places.



Over the past year, the ministry reviewed research from other jurisdictions and engaged in a series of strategic dialogue sessions with key organizations, public health professionals, several partner ministries and other levels of government to inform our strategy. This process helped us learn about new and innovative ideas, and identify a range of injury prevention activities, gaps, and emerging priorities to address the challenges people face in avoiding injuries every day. Government leadership is required to:

- Coordinate research, surveillance and data management to inform evidence-based decisions and program development.
- Develop culturally appropriate responses that address attitudinal and behavioural barriers when addressing populations at greatest risk of injury.
- Coordinate and integrate activities to maximize effectiveness and reduce fragmentation and duplication.
- Build on existing capacity and expertise to make Ontario a healthy, active and safe place.

What do we mean by injury?

Injuries include all the ways people can be physically hurt, impaired or killed, involving unintentional or intentional damage to the body.

Examples of unintentional injuries include motor vehicle crashes, falls, sport injuries and unintentional poisoning.

Intentional injuries may include those resulting from violence, self harm and suicide.

INJURIES ARE PREDICTABLE & PREVENTABLE

Every 30 seconds someone visits an emergency department in Ontario because of an injury.¹ Approximately 95% of all injuries are both predictable and preventable.²

Injuries result from unsafe environments, conditions and behaviours. By recognizing, changing, and controlling these factors, most injuries can be prevented.

Every Ontarian should be able to live, work, learn and play in safe environments. We – individuals, families, community organizations, employers, and governments – all have an important role to play in making Ontario a safe place for everyone to live healthy, vibrant lives.

The burden of injury is felt not only by those who are injured, but also by their families, caregivers and employers.

- Approximately one in every four emergency department visits in Ontario is injury-related, and among children aged 10 – 14, this increases to almost one in two.³
- In 2004-2005, motor vehicle collisions were the leading cause of major trauma hospitalizations in Ontario at 44%, followed by unintentional falls at 34%.⁴
- An estimated 40% of falls leading to hospitalization are the result of hip fractures.⁵ Approximately 70% of hip fractures are osteoporosis-related and result in death in up to 20% of cases, and in disability in 50% of those who survive.⁶



- Sport and recreation related injuries account for ten percent of major trauma cases in Ontario.⁷
- Each year these injuries cost Ontario an estimated \$5.7B in direct costs to the health system and lost productivity⁸ – almost as much as cancer.⁹

Investing upstream in preventative efforts can significantly reduce the burden on those who experience injuries, their families, caregivers and the health system. The return on investment of injury prevention efforts has been widely examined, and experts suggest that a comprehensive strategy in Ontario could result in significant cost avoidance including:

- A 20% reduction in falls among seniors 55 years of age and over; which represents 4,000 fewer hospital stays and 1,000 fewer older adults with permanent disabilities;¹⁰
- A 20% reduction in falls among children aged 0-14 years, which amounts to over 3,000 fewer injuries and cost savings of \$62 million annually;¹¹ and
- A 30% reduction in the incidence of motor vehicle collisions, which accounts for more than 25,000 fewer injuries or over \$300 million in avoided costs each year.¹²

WHO GETS INJURED?

Quite simply, injuries can happen to anyone. Injuries present a significant risk to our health and well-being regardless of our age, gender, race, income or where we live.

However, the burden of injury is greater for some groups than others. In particular, children, youth, seniors, Aboriginal peoples and northern Ontarians are all at greater risk for injury than other Ontarians.

- Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children and youth in Canada.¹³
- In addition, injury rates are highest among toddlers and older children, with falls being the most frequent cause of emergency department visits and hospitalizations of children between 0-14 years old.¹⁴
- Over 30% of alcohol-related motor vehicle collisions involved Canadians under the age of 25.¹⁵
- For Ontarians over the age of 65, falls are by far the leading cause of injury-related emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and in-hospital deaths.¹⁶ In 2004/05 seniors accounted for 40% of injury-related hospitalizations.¹⁷
- The rates of unintentional injuries are significantly higher among Aboriginal peoples than other people in Canada.¹⁸ Injury is the leading cause of death for Aboriginal children, youth, and young adults in Canada.¹⁹
- In Northern Ontario, the rate of deaths, hospitalizations and permanent disability due to injuries is approximately one and a half times higher than the provincial average.²⁰



WHY DO PEOPLE GET INJURED?

There is no one predominant reason why people get injured, just as there is no one reason people get sick. Rather, there are a broad range of personal, social and economic factors and conditions which shape a person's health and influence the likelihood of injuries. These determinants of health include, among others; the social and physical environments in which people live; income; culture; level of education; access to nutritious food; opportunities to be physically active; employment and working conditions; and biology and genetic endowment.

In addition to these factors and conditions, there are also a number of behaviours which increase a person's risk of injury. Aggressive driving practices, the misuse of alcohol and drugs, and participation in high risk activities, such as not wearing appropriate protective equipment while participating in sport and physical activity, all increase the likelihood that someone may be injured.

For some people or groups of people, the presence and interaction of one or more these factors, conditions and behaviours in their everyday life may place them at a greater risk of being injured.

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE: ONTARIO'S INJURY PREVENTION STRATEGY

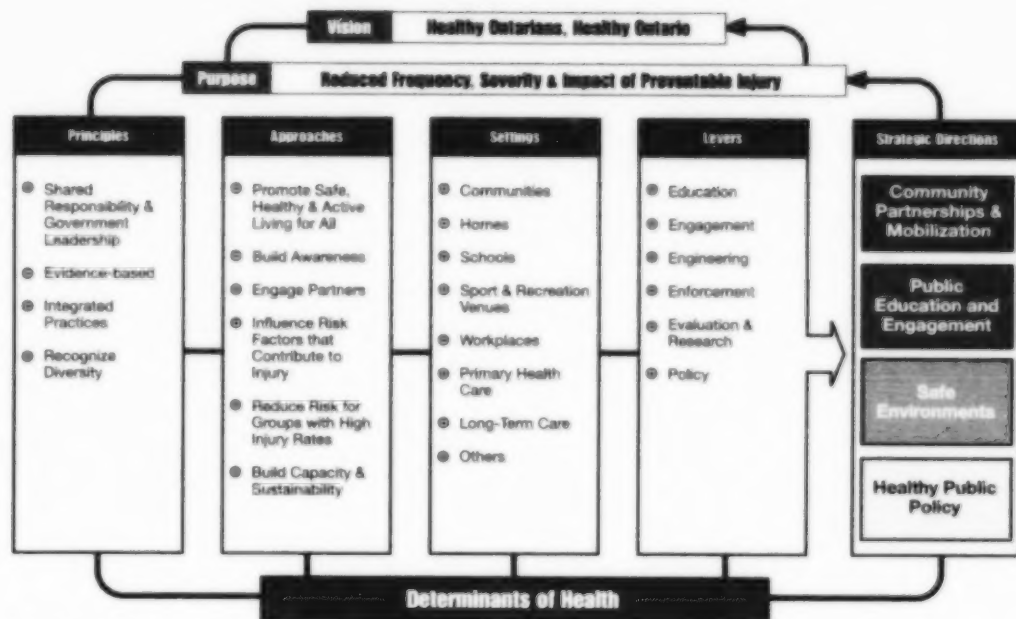
Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy is a comprehensive, coordinated plan which aims to reduce the frequency, severity and impact of preventable injury in Ontario.

The Ministry of Health Promotion is a champion of healthy and active living both within government and across the province. We will build upon Ontario's foundation of injury prevention programs and services and nurture a culture that enables all Ontarians to live healthy, active and safe lives.

Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy will engage and mobilize a broad range of partners to reduce the frequency, severity and impact of preventable injury – contributing to healthier communities and a healthier province. Through the combined efforts of our partners across sectors and levels of government, we have a tremendous opportunity to help families and communities avoid injury, save lives, and reduce the burden of injury in Ontario.



Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy



PRINCIPLES

Shared Responsibility & Government Leadership:

Government leadership, and partnerships and alliances across sectors are required to address our shared responsibility for injury prevention.

Evidence-based:

Ongoing assessment, surveillance, research and evaluation must be undertaken to support the development of effective programs, policies and practices.

Integrated Practices:

Leverage, link and integrate the efforts of individuals, communities, organizations and governments to reduce the burden of injury across settings.

Recognize Diversity:

Engage leaders to design relevant, culturally appropriate approaches to address the varied needs of Ontario's diverse communities.



OUR APPROACH

We know that influencing culture, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour to improve the health of a community or population can take several years. As such, a range of strategies that address multiple causes and contributing factors will be required to effectively reduce the burden of injury.

A population health approach is the most effective way to address injuries in Ontario. By focusing on population health and working across sectors, our approach to injury prevention will help build awareness of the risks for injury that every Ontarian faces. This approach also emphasizes the importance of addressing health disparities that result from inequalities in the underlying determinants of health and that place some groups at greater risk of injury.

What is a Population Health Approach?

We have a greater opportunity to support the health of all Ontarians by taking an approach that enables individuals and populations to achieve better health outcomes by:

- Promoting health at each age and stage of life;
- Influencing the determinants of health;
- Engaging partners to share the responsibility for a healthier Ontario;
- Improving the health of those most at risk; and
- Removing barriers to healthy, active and safe living.

SETTINGS

Injuries can happen anywhere. However, each setting is unique, with distinct challenges, circumstances and risks for injury. No one level of government, ministry or organization on its own can support the health of all people in all settings.

Some ministries have a legislative responsibility in certain settings, such as the Ministry of Labour's responsibility for workplaces and the Ministry of Transportation's jurisdiction over driver and vehicle licensing, and the design, construction and maintenance of provincial highways. The Ministry of Health Promotion will focus our efforts on other key settings – such as communities, homes, and sport and recreation venues – and provide supports which are appropriate and accessible for the populations in each of these settings.

As a champion of injury prevention, we will also work with our partners across sectors to promote safe, healthy environments in all settings.



LEVERS

A variety of tools can be utilized to help reduce injuries, including:

Education:

Education helps build community awareness and influence behaviour by informing people about potentially hazardous situations with risk of injury.

Engagement:

Partnerships and community-based mobilization to inform the development and implementation of initiatives, built on a wide base of knowledge, experience and expertise.

Enforcement:

Enactment and enforcement of legislation and regulations that compel risk-reducing behaviour, such as helmet laws and mandatory seat belt and booster seat use.

Engineering:

Initiatives that address product designs and augment the environment in ways that help reduce injuries.

Evaluation and Research:

Relevant, timely and accessible data that informs the effectiveness, impacts and outcomes of community and systems level efforts.

Policy:

Plans and strategies developed by governments, the private sector and community organizations to influence and impact injury prevention and the broader determinants of health.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy utilizes a phased, multi-pronged approach that focuses on four key strategic directions.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & MOBILIZATION

Community partnerships that mobilize people and resources across sectors are key to the development and implementation of effective injury prevention initiatives. These partnerships bring together community organizations, individuals and other interested parties to participate in the formulation of local initiatives that are best suited to the community's needs.

Beyond their role in making their workplaces safe, private sector companies can also be helpful injury prevention initiatives within their communities.

Building on the Foundation

The Ministry of Health Promotion recognizes that community-based injury prevention organizations and practitioners are in the best position to take action toward reducing the burden of injury among their local population.

By developing relationships with the appropriate injury prevention partners, including sport and recreation providers, community groups and public health, we can build on the work already underway at the local level. This will allow us to gain a better understanding of the key gaps and the factors that contribute to injuries in the province.



Public health units have a long history of partnerships and leadership in injury prevention in communities across Ontario. In fact, provincial legislation requires public health units to deliver injury prevention programs that aim to reduce the disability, morbidity and mortality caused by motorized vehicles, bicycle crashes, alcohol and other substances and falls in the elderly. A broad range of services are provided to priority populations and the community at large in key settings to prevent injuries and substance abuse.

In addition, the Ontario Public Health Association – in partnership with the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation – provides ongoing professional training and networking opportunities for public health injury prevention managers.

Safe Communities Canada, Safe Kids Canada, the ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada, SMARTISK, the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and several hospitals and academic institutions are actively involved in raising awareness, building alliances across sectors, conducting research and advocating for policies and programs that help to reduce injuries.

Supporting Community Partnerships & Mobilization

The Ministry of Health Promotion's support to the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat has helped increase dissemination of a Falls Prevention Toolkit for conducting presentations to seniors in community settings across Ontario. "This partnership also allowed for a French version of the toolkit and a companion exercise video to be produced.

Our Communities In Action Fund helps local and provincial not-for-profit organizations provide and enhance opportunities for physical activity through community sport and recreation. Enhancements to the program are aimed at reducing the risk of sport and recreation related injury, and providing a more cohesive, integrated program in support of healthy, active and safe living.

PUBLIC EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

Public education and engagement are critical elements in fostering knowledge and understanding that injuries are predictable and preventable. The more people, organizations and communities understand the factors that contribute to injuries, the more likely they are to take precautions to avoid them.

Over time, these efforts can lead to a broader cultural shift and a change in social norms. This was most effectively demonstrated in early tobacco control campaigns that eventually helped to change the way Ontarians viewed smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke.



Building on the Foundation

We know that influencing attitudes and behaviours requires the use of a range of public education approaches. Through our other efforts, including Ontario's Action Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living, and the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, we've learned that public education is a critical component of comprehensive health promotion initiatives. For example, our experience with the *stupid.ca* campaign has taught us valuable lessons about how to engage youth in a dialogue on tobacco control, and make connections to supporting programs and services.

Across Ontario, partners in injury prevention are also employing a number of public education and engagement approaches to influence the behaviours of Ontarians.

The Workplace Safety Insurance Board's "There Are No Accidents" campaign aims to dispel the myth that workplace "accidents" actually exist. The campaign emphasizes that a safe workplace is every worker's right. It is the employer's responsibility to provide proper training, while it is everyone's responsibility to take workplace safety seriously.

Safe Kids Canada, in partnership with Hudson's Bay Company, has launched a "Kids that Click" program, to educate parents on how to choose and use car seats, booster seats, and seat belts safety. As part of this program, Safe Kids Canada has also produced a DVD entitled "Kids that Click – Keep Your Kids Safe on Every Ride: Tips for Using Car Seats, Booster Seats, and Seat Belts Safely."

Supporting Public Education & Engagement

The Ministry of Health Promotion has partnered with the Ministry of Transportation to support the production of a sequel to the *iDrive* video to raise awareness among drivers under 25 about the risks and consequences of unsafe driving, with a focus on aggressive driving. Starting this school year, the program will be available free of charge to secondary schools, community police, public health workers, driving schools and road safety advocates through the Ontario Community Council on Impaired Driving.

In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, we are supporting Safe Kids Canada to link with the Farm Safety Association to help raise awareness of the risks of injuries for children in farming communities. This initiative will enhance distribution of the North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks and promote awareness of preventable injuries to children in farm settings through a poster campaign.

The Ministry of Health Promotion is supporting the ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada to partner with public health and other community organizations to implement the Ontario Safe Sport Helmet initiative. This initiative is aimed at helping to raise awareness of injuries and will include a helmet giveaway program to encourage kids to be active and have fun.



SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Some of the environments where Ontarians live, work, learn and play can increase their risks of injury. A range of coordinated and sustained actions across sectors is required to support the creation of enabling environments that will contribute to reducing the frequency, severity and impact of injuries.

Particular attention will be required to address the needs of those communities that are at greater risk for injury. For example, the conditions that place seniors at risk require the sustained efforts of a number of partners to tackle issues such as safe housing, medication use and adequate nutrition, as well as social isolation that can contribute to depression, lack of physical activity, and alcohol and substance abuse.

Building on the Foundation

Increasing people's awareness that the design and condition of our physical surroundings contribute to injuries is an important part of increasing overall understanding that injuries are predictable and preventable.

By working with our partners, we can influence the development of policies that impact the environments and settings in which people live their lives. We can also support the implementation of initiatives that make people more knowledgeable of their risks for injury and help build capacity to take action on planning and creating safe environments.

Many public health units across Ontario are leading the way on this front. For example, together with the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, some public health partners have supported the "Stay on Your Feet" falls prevention program, which promotes physical activity, safe sidewalks and safe homes for seniors. This program has been extensively evaluated and addresses risk factors for falls such as lack of physical activity, vision and hearing difficulties and environmental hazards.

A number of public health units are also working with the Ministry of Transportation and local partners to offer child car seat safety programs. These programs raise awareness about the importance of proper car seat installation to prevent injuries.



Supporting Safe Environments

Ontario's Rural Plan helps communities boost economic development, address infrastructure requirements, improve access to educational opportunities, and support healthy communities.

The Ministry of Education has provided funding support to the Lifesaving Society, which delivers the "Swim to Survive" program to young students in Ontario. To help teach young children to learn how to survive an unexpected fall into deep water, the three-step "Swim to Survive" program focuses on being able to do a single skill series: roll into deep water, tread water for one minute and swim 50 metres.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services regulates child care in Ontario through the Day Nurseries Act, which sets out policies and procedures related to building and accommodation, equipment and furnishings, playgrounds, records, nutrition, programming, health and medical issues, age groupings and staff to child ratios. Child care operators are also required to implement a Playground Safety Policy which has been reviewed with staff prior to commencing employment and annually thereafter.

The Ministry of Health Promotion is supporting the expansion of the Safe Communities Canada model by engaging mentors to mobilize communities at increased risk of injury. Safe Communities Canada also leads the Passport to Safety program, an innovative, online national awareness program, offering Ontarians the opportunity to test their health and safety knowledge and be awarded a safety "passport". Through support from Ontario's Workplace Safety Insurance Board, this program is available free to Ontario teachers.



HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY

Most people believe that they are responsible for their own health. However, not everyone can address risks to their health, including risk of injury, on their own. The policies and programs developed by governments, community organizations and the private sector can influence the health of people and communities and help to reduce their risk of injury.

Building on the Foundation

The development of Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy is a model of healthy public policy. The ministry engaged leaders in injury prevention, research and public health to inform the most effective ways to identify priorities for collective action on injury prevention.

Within government, we have developed effective mechanisms and forums to link across ministries with a wide range of social, economic and environmental responsibilities. These mechanisms are helping identify opportunities where ministries can align complementary efforts to promote health and reduce risks of injury.

We are also working with ministry and community partners to bring together leaders in injury prevention to profile achievements and identify opportunities to work towards reducing the burden of injury. For example, in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation, public health professionals, SMARTRISK, and other partners, the annual Ontario Injury Prevention Conference provides a forum for injury prevention experts to examine key issues, deliberate on alternative approaches and acquire new knowledge and skills to inform their work.

Supporting Healthy Public Policy

The Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Labour are co-leading the Forum for the Advancement of Healthy Workplaces. This group of leaders from the private sector, industry, communities and government is working together to identify opportunities to build workplaces that support healthy living and contribute to reducing injuries.

Our partnerships with the Ontario Public Health Association and SMARTRISK support the Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre, which helps build local and provincial capacity for injury prevention practitioners and community partners to reduce the incidence and impact of injury in Ontario.



CALL TO ACTION

Ontario's Injury Prevention Strategy is a comprehensive, coordinated plan which aims to reduce the frequency, severity and impact of preventable injury in Ontario.

The strategy acknowledges that reducing this burden is about more than the choices any one individual makes. A wide range of personal, social and economic factors influence whether someone gets injured. Our strategy provides a comprehensive framework to address these complex and interrelated factors.

We also understand that no one level of government, ministry or organization can address all the factors that contribute to injuries. The engagement and mobilization of people and resources across sectors are required to develop and implement policies, programs and practices that are best suited to addressing the needs of Ontario's diverse communities.

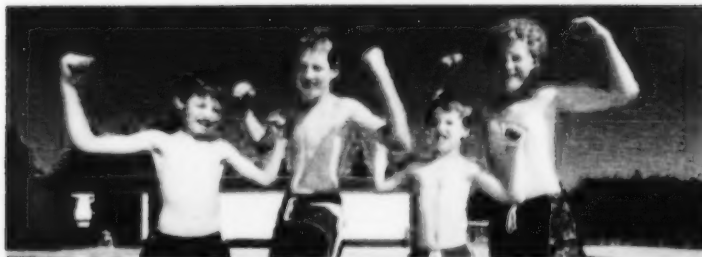
This strategy represents our first steps to coordinate and strengthen the everyday efforts across sectors that are helping make the province a safer place. This strategy also provides a road map for planning within government and for communities across Ontario.

By working with our partners we will focus our attention on where there is the greatest need and where we can have the most success:

- Community Partnerships and Mobilization
- Public Education and Engagement
- Safe Environments
- Healthy Public Policy

Our vision of healthier people living in a healthier province is one where all communities, schools, households and workplaces across Ontario are working together to remove barriers to healthy, active and safe living; and all Ontarians have greater opportunities to enjoy healthy lives.

With this strategy we call upon all our partners – individuals, families, community organizations, employers, the private sector and governments – to continue the journey toward a healthier and safer Ontario.



How You Can Get Involved

Preventing injuries is a shared responsibility. Here are some organizations that can help you get involved, connect your organization with local partners and mobilize your community to help make Ontario a healthier, more active and safer place every day.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
www.camh.net

HealthyOntario.com
www.healthyontario.com

Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences
www.ices.on.ca/webpage.cfm

Ministry of Health Promotion
www.mhp.gov.on.ca

Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre
www.oninjuryresources.ca/home

Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation
www.onf.org

Ontario Public Health Association
www.opha.on.ca

Public Health Unit Locations and Contact Information
www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_mn.html

Safe Communities Canada
www.safecommunities.ca

Safe Kids Canada
www.sickkids.ca/safekidscanada

SMARTRISK
www.smartrisk.ca

ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada
www.thinkfirst.ca/default.asp

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